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DEPARTMENT OF STATE AIRGRAM

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TO : Department of State

INFO: CINCSO FOR POLAD, Amembassies TEGUCIGALPA, SAN SALVADOR, MANAGUA, SAN JOSE, DOD

FROM : Amembassy GUATEMALA

SUBJECT: Patterns of Terrorism: A Statistical Look

REF : _____

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1. When the Méndez government took office in July 1966, there was no question either where the guerrillas were or which was the most unsettled area in the country; it was in the eastern part of the country, particularly in the mountainous regions on either side of the Atlantic Highway--the guerrillas' stronghold. In the fall of that year, however, the GOG began a vigorous anti-guerrilla campaign, using not only the Army but also civilians drawn mostly from among the rightist "Liberacionistas" and armed by the Army. From the standpoint of cleaning the guerrillas out of the area, this campaign was an outstanding success and the organized guerrillas were almost completely routed.
2. This raises several questions, however; for one, where, if anywhere, did the guerrillas go? And perhaps tied to the first, what is now the most agitated, violent region of the country?
3. As one tool to analyze these questions, the Embassy has prepared a graph plotting the level of violence, presumably related to terrorism, for the four regions of the country affected: The Capital area, the Eastern area, the South Coast and the Highlands (see enclosure). (It should be noted that only those incidents of violence which appeared to be politically motivated have been included in the graph. The figures are a gross index of violence per se, and do not attempt to distinguish as to the political category--rightists or insurgents--of either perpetrators or victims.) There are certain patterns which emerge; some obvious, others more revealing:

Enclosure: ³Graph of Terrorist Incidents

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR	
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Drafted by: POL:WNewlin:cam:10/4/67

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Guatemala A-143

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- A. The Highlands has always been, and still is, the quietest area.
- B. The Capital area was second to the Eastern Region in level of violence in December, but by April was the most active, became by far the most active in June, but has fallen off since and in September was behind both the East and the South Coast, but in about the same range.
- C. The South Coast was well below both the Capital and the East in December, but has become considerably more active, was the most active area in August, and is now number two, in about the same range as the East and the Capital.
- D. The Eastern Region was the most active from December through March, fell sharply in May and June but has come back and was the most active area again in September, but in the same range as the South Coast and the Capital.
- E. From December through April, there was a positive correlation among the number of incidents in the different regions. This broke down somewhat in May, and went haywire in June when incidents in the capital took a sharp jump upward, and both the South Coast and the Eastern regions took an equally sharp jump downward. In July the reverse was true: incidents in the South and East picked up sharply while activity in the Capital fell off sharply. Since then changes in the level have not been very marked.

4. There are no really firm conclusions that can be drawn from the patterns except to confirm the following which the Embassy has known and reported in the past:

5. The South Coast has been becoming more of a hot spot. The activity here is probably from a combination of three sources. There are probably some guerrillas. There have been reports for some time that the insurgents were going to move into this area, and in August a guerrilla training camp was discovered (Guatemala A-109). There is also a well established, well entrenched rightist nucleus in the area, particularly in the region from Escuintla to San Jose who are not above violence, particularly when they feel threatened. Finally, there are reports of armed bands operating in the area that seem to look more like common criminals than insurgents, and have been so identified by the Minister of Government (Guatemala A-122).

6. The Capital went through a period of intense activity and is still an important center of violence. The big spurt in May and June coincided with the final

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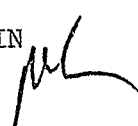
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stage of the COIN mop-up operation in the northeast. (It was on May 27 that Col. Arana announced to the press that the guerrillas had been reduced to about ten percent and were in scattered, disorganized groups (Guatemala A-501).) It might be possible to speculate that the guerrilla leaders moved from the mountains to the Capital where they stepped up operations, but in fact reports of activity during May and June show most of the violence to have originated on the part of the security forces--both overt and clandestine. It is more likely, therefore, that the presence of more guerrillas in the Capital simply gave the security forces more, and perhaps more important, vulnerable raw material to work with.

7. The Eastern region presents a more muddled picture. The high rate of activity during December and the early months of this year presumably reflect the guerrilla presence in the area, and the sharp fall off in May and June could be explained by saying that it was then that the final mop-up was completed. What then explains the upsurge of activity in July, and the continued high level? Probably, the pick-up in the activity of the numerous "armed civilians" in the area. As is noted above, they consist mostly of far right "Liberacionistas." As the guerrilla threat diminished, they turned more and more on any element they considered significantly to the left of themselves (Guatemala A-63). They are now almost surely responsible for the bulk of the terrorist incidents in the region.

8. The speculative nature of the above cannot be overemphasized. The chart itself is for the most part drawn from published sources which not only are just the top of the iceberg but also tend to report incidents in the Capital more fully than those in the field; assassination victims invariably are disposed of away from the scene of the crime. The general trends are probably valid, however, and the fact that this purely statistical profile of what has been happening can be read consistently with the Embassy's more subjective judgments probably adds some credibility to the latter.

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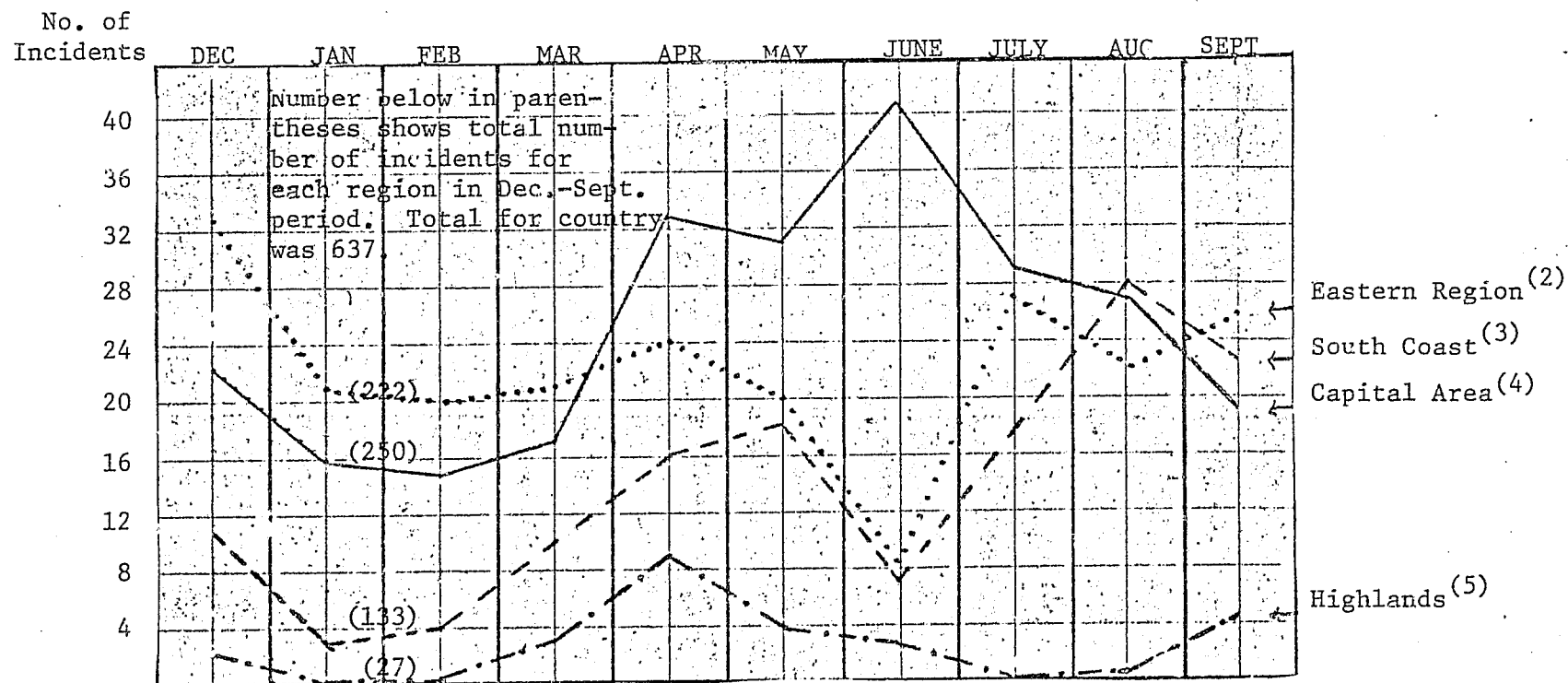
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Guatemala A- 143
Enclosure

FREQUENCY OF TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS⁽¹⁾
BY REGION
DECEMBER 1966 - SEPTEMBER 1967



1. For purposes of this graph both acts of violence, such as shootings, bombings, etc., and assassinated bodies found are counted as incidents.
2. Eastern Region includes Departments: Jutiapa, Jalapa, El Progreso, Zacapa, Chiquimula, Izabal.
3. South Coast includes Departments: San Marcos, Quezaltenango, Retalhuleu, Suchitepequez, Escuintla, Santa Rosa.
4. Capital Area includes Departments: Sacatepequez, Guatemala.
5. Highlands includes Departments: Totonicapan, Chimaltenango, Huehuetenango, El Quiche, Baja Verapaz, Alta Verapaz, Solola.

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